

MEMORANDUM
DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
Date: 6/30/05

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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~~SECRET/EYES ONLY~~

September 24, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR:

DR. KISSINGER

FROM:

V. A. WALTERS *VW*

I mentioned briefly to you in Paris my concerns regarding a possibility which cannot be totally dismissed. Namely that the Government of the Chinese Peoples' Republic are genuinely world revolutionaries and anxious to move the course of history in a direction in keeping with their ideology. The fact that they just did it to Prime Minister Sato adds to my belief that we should consider this contingency or at least not just dismiss it. Chou En-lai said quite bluntly that Sato could not come to Peking but after the Japanese revamp their government, then one of his successors could come. "He could even come in a special plane." That last sentence rang a small warning bell in my mind.

I do not say the following will occur but I would hate to see us caught totally unprepared if it did. In the hypothesis that they really are revolutionaries and want to help the "Progressive Forces" elsewhere, would it not be a supreme coup for them at some point in our dealings with them (and it seems to me that it would have maximum effect if they were to do it after the President's trip to Peking), to break off the talks and issue a statement that they had tried to be reasonable but it was impossible to do business and especially make peace with "That Fascist Nixon" and announce that they would be happy to do business with the United States as soon as the American people elected a peace loving President from among the progressive forces in America. Five years ago I would have said that this would have been very counter-productive and irritated the American People. I am no longer sure. I fear that it might be a powerful weapon for the President's enemies, especially in the press.

This is really none of my business but I feel I would be derelict in my duty if I did not mention it to you. It may never happen, but if God forbid it does, I would not want us to be caught utterly unprepared.

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I quote from Sun Tzu, "Subduing the enemy's army without actually fighting is the acme of skill." I recall Jean Sainteny's book on Ho Chi Minh where he describes a warm friendly dinner with Pham Van Dong at the Tour D'Argent in Paris where the Vietnamese sat gazing out over the Pressed Duck and the Cathedral of Notre Dame and finally he turned to Sainteny and said, "I who have never been in France before now understand why all of my countrymen who know your country can never forget it." Yet adds Sainteny, "At Fontainebleau a few weeks later it was He who was the toughest negotiator and He who in the end took the initiative of the rupture that was to be so heavy in consequences."

I know this will not make me popular but I just do not want to see us surprised or caught off balance. I know others have been thinking of it, but it has weighed on my mind. I hope like everyone else that they will not choose to exercise this capability but they could.

~~SECRET/EYES ONLY~~